

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 4937

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: RQ, PFOR, UN, AS

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDE ON ANTI-COLONIAL ISSUES

REF: A) USUN 3076; B) CANBERRA 4803; C) USUN 2967

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: WHILE NUMBER OF AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS IN UN MISSION AND AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY WANTED TO BE HELPFUL TO U.S. ON RECENTLY-PASSED RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO IN UN, PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM REFLECTED STRONG AND EMOTIONAL BIAS ON COLONIAL-TYPE RESOLUTIONS HE HAS EXPRESSED FOR SOME TIME, BOTH IN PUBLIC AND IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION. LOGICAL ARGUMENT ON SUCH ISSUE WILL HAVE ONLY SLIGHT EFFECT ON HIM. BELIEVE DEPT AND USUN SHOULD ANTICIPATE A LESS HELPFUL AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDE THAN IN THE PAST IF A COLONIAL OR SEMI-COLONIAL ISSUE IS INVOLVED. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY APPRECIATES USUN COMMENTS (REF A) ON HANDLING OF PUERTO RICO ISSUE IN UN RECENTLY. AUSTRALIAN DEP PERM REP CAMPBELL IS WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN TO EMBASSY, WHERE HE WAS ASST SECRETARY OF DEFENSE POLICY BRANCH OF DFA PRIOR TO UN POSTING, AND HE WAS FAVORABLY KNOWN TO OFFICERS OF DEPT 1962-65, WHEN HE WAS IN AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON. CAMPBELL IS MARRIED TO AMERICAN CITIZEN (UNLESS SHE HAS VERY RECENTLY BECOME AN
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AUSTRALIAN) AND IS CLEARLY WILLING TO GIVE FULL

HEARING TO U.S. VIEWS ON MANY ISSUES.

3. POINT OF REF B WAS TO REFLECT CURRENT THINKING OF GOA ON ALL QTE COLONIAL END QTE ISSUES. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT KELSO, WHO IS ALSO WELL AND FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO U.S., HAS MORE ACCURATELY REFLECTED GOA THINKING THAN CAMPBELL HAS DONE, NO DOUBT BECAUSE HE IS IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM (WHO IS ALSO AUSTRALIAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS). WE ARE AWARE, FROM REMARKS MADE BY KELSO, THAT AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WISHED TO GO FURTHER IN SUPPORT OF U.S. POSITION ON PUERTO RICO THAN DFA INSTRUCTED AUSTRALIAN UN DELEGATION TO DO, FOLLOWING DECISION BY WHITLAM. CAMPBELL CLEARLY DECIDED TO CONTRADICT HIS INSTRUCTIONS ON PUERTO RICO ISSUE AS ORDER TO ABSTAIN, WHEREAS KELSO TOLD US (PARA 4 REF B) THAT AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION WAS AUTHORIZED TO CONSIDER ABSTAINING. WHILE WE DID NOT SEE TELEGRAM OF INSTRUCTIONS ON PUERTO RICO ISSUE, KELSO TOLD US HE WAS PRACTICALLY READING IT VERBATIM, AND OUR CONTACT WITH HIM HERE AND IN OTHER POSTS HAS BEEN INTIMATE ENOUGH TO TAKE HIS WORD FOR IT.

4. PROBLEM FOR U.S. ON ANTI-COLONIAL ISSUES IS NOT RPT NOT ANY LACK OF AUSTRALIANS IN UN DELEGATION AND IN AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON WHO AGREE WITH US. PROBLEM IS RATHER THAT PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM HAS CONSISTENTLY TAKEN MORE OUTSPOKEN ANTI-COLONIAL STANCE THAN DID HIS PREDECESSORS, AND THIS IS WHAT WILL DETERMINE AUSTRALIAN POLICY. HE INTENDS TO ASSOCIATE AUSTRALIA MORE CLOSELY WITH AFRO-ASIAN VIEWPOINTS.

5. WHITLAM'S ATTITUDE ON WHAT HE REGARDS AS COLONIAL ISSUES IS ESSENTIALLY EMOTIONAL IN NATURE AND WILL NOT BE AFFECTED EASILY BY OTHER ARGUMENTS. AIDE MEMOIRE ON PUERTO RICO WHICH EMBASSY LEFT WITH DFA ON AUG 24, FOR EXAMPLE, DREW HEAVILY ON EXCELLENT MATERIAL SUPPLIED BY USUN AND QUOTED IN FULL AMBASSADOR SCALI'S STATEMENT OF AUG 22. IT CITED 1953 RES WHICH REMOVED PUERTO RICO FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING LIST.

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WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT WHITLAM READ AIDE MEMOIRE, IT OBVIOUSLY HAD ONLY SLIGHT EFFECT ON HIM, THOUGH HE AGREED TO ALLOW AUSTRALIAN UN DELEGATION TO ABSTAIN RATHER THAN INSTRUCTING THEM TO VOTE FOR CUBAN-BACKED DRAFT RESOLUTION.

6. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO OUR BEST ON ISSUES OF THIS KIND. HOWEVER, DEPT AND USUN SHOULD

ANTICIPATE A LESS HELPFUL AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDE ON UN MATTERS THAN
IN THE PAST, PARTICULARLY IF A COLONIAL OR SEMI-COLONIAL
ISSUE IS INVOLVED.
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